Building a community of collaborative inquiry through an on-line Physical Education mentoring programme

Bishopdale School (TLIF 1-016)

For the Ministry of Education
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Project title:
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Summary

This project sought to introduce teachers to: (1) new physical education thinking, (2) new physical education methodology, (3) the use of new digital technologies; and (4) collaboratively working with new people.

This project was intended to inquire into the impact of a mentor programme in supporting teachers to deliver Physical Education programmes that:

- reflect the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and an Everybody Counts Ethos (EBC) so that learning programmes support students to “be accepting of others, feel more confident to participate in a wider range of movement experiences, act in health-promoting ways in their interactions with their peers across a range of settings and think critically about their worlds.”
- model effective teaching practices; and
- utilise physical education teaching models such as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), conflict resolution, adventure based learning within authentic contexts of greater relevance to all akonga.

Inquiry Team

The schools involved in this project were Bishopdale School, Avonhead School, Cobham Intermediate, and Breens Intermediate.

- Project Lead: Tim Morgan, Bishopdale School
- External advisor: Jackie Cowan, University of Canterbury.

The participating teachers were:

Background

The team considered that Health and Physical Education (HPE) programmes in New Zealand Schools are typically dominated by the themes concerning games, sports, fitness and personal hygiene.

It was proposed that these often lack relevance for many students and do not reflect the future focussed intentions of the NZC. It was suggested that big ideas like “Increasing Participation” and “Improving Performance” would provide more authentic learning opportunities and allow teachers to increase the levels of critical thinking and reflection within physical education programmes and, in turn, allow students to more successfully access Level 4 curriculum objectives.

It was envisioned that student achievement would improve when compared to 2013 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) findings. The NMSSA data showed a rapid decline in achievement from Year 4 (Curriculum Level 2) to Year 8 (Curriculum Level 4). In particular, the study showed:

- NZ European students’ achievement results declined from 98% at Year 4 to 55% at Year 8.
- Māori students’ achievement results declined from 90% at Year 4 to 32% at Year 8.
- Pasifika students’ achievement results dropped from 85% to 16%.

It was expected that achievement data resulting from the project would show improved levels of achievement when compared to the NMSSA 2013 benchmarks.

The inquiry

Mentorship took the form of a blend of face-to-face workshops, provision of online resources and the use of Google Hangouts between teachers to facilitate conversation and reflection.

The project began with a full-day workshop held at Avonhead School. Participants on this day included four teachers from the lead school, Bishopdale, and two teachers from each of the partner schools.
This workshop served to introduce the purpose of the Teacher-led Innovation Fund (TLIF), to begin to build a collaborative community of teachers, and to introduce the key Physical Education approaches TGfU, conflict resolution and the EBC ethos.

Teachers were provided with a unit of work for the theme of “Increasing Participation”, a resource of game cards, and were also provided access to the Active Participate programme for further reference throughout the term [http://morgantim111.wixsite.com/activeparticipate](http://morgantim111.wixsite.com/activeparticipate) (Accessed: 23 April 2018).

Following the workshop, teachers were supported through two face-to-face visits for the purpose of providing suggestions and for giving feedback about delivery. Teachers attended a second workshop for the purpose of sharing their experiences and reflecting on the work they had done. At this point, the underlying concepts were consolidated and the “in, through and about” model (central to the NZC) was elaborated upon.

Google Hangouts were attempted across the group with mixed success as teachers seemed to prefer the face-to-face support provided.

Data was gathered in the form of student work samples and teachers’ self-reflections. Student work samples were gathered throughout the unit delivery and included tasks modelled very closely on those used to gather the NMSSA findings. Teachers were also formally observed teaching HPE and these observations provided a source of data.

At the conclusion of each unit of work, student responses were considered using the Critical Thinking Tool included in the 2013 NMSSA report on Physical Education.

**Key findings**

1. Impact on teacher practices:
   - Teachers were motivated and enthusiastic about the learning programmes. Of the four schools, three have included the themes in annual plans following the project.
   - Schools did not have a lead teacher in each of their schools and successfully relied on the face-to-face visits from their mentor to energize their practice.
• The Google Hangouts did not function as a vehicle for teacher communication, however collaborative groups did develop from the face-to-face workshops. On reflection, Google Hangouts or similar technology may be better suited to document face-to-face conversations to provide evidence of changing teacher understandings.

2. Impact on student participation and learning:

• Student achievement results did not trend downward as sharply as the NMSSA Year 8 suggested. Participants reflected that the nature and style of learning programme showed greater cultural responsiveness and this may be a factor that reduced the decline.

• Year 2 – 8 data was considered by placing comparative percentages on a table of the NMSSA benchmarks. The student achievement data for those involved in the TLIF showed a reduction in the decline noted in the NMSSA findings. This is most evident when considering Māori and Pasifika results.

• The TLIF data noted a less significant decline in achievement from Year 4 (Curriculum Level 2) to Year 8 (Curriculum Level 4).
  ➢ New Zealand European students’ achievement results declined from 94% at Year 4 to 55% at Year 8.
  ➢ Māori students’ achievement results declined from 79% at Year 4 to 52% at Year 8.
  ➢ Pasifika students’ achievement results dropped from 58% to 57%

• Year 2 and 3 students involved in the TLIF project were also assessed and compared against the Year 4 (Curriculum Level 2) results. Again, these results were pleasing, as follows:
  ➢ 56% of Year 2 and 3 NZ European students’ achievement results were consistent with level 2 expectations.
  ➢ 61% of Year 2 and 3 Māori students’ achievement results were consistent with level 2 expectations.
  ➢ 33% of Year 2 and 3 NZ European students’ achievement results were consistent with level 2 expectations.
3. Other findings:

- Building a collaborative relationship based upon a shared purpose is vital.
- A shared purpose to create an experience worth sharing at events such as the Physical Education New Zealand (PENZ) conference, cluster settings and across participating schools helped create a collaborative community.
- In 2016, the teachers demonstrated careful application of recognised teaching models such as multi activity, TGfU and inquiry to suit their stated purpose. A key factor leading to this was the regular and low-level communication between lead teacher and the teachers via Google Hangouts, email and in person.
- Effective implementation of new pedagogies requires sound relationships and regular reflective challenges.
- Innovative programmes need to scaffold the introduction of new ideas so that ideas can be connected to existing beliefs and ways of working.

**Key implications**

If suggesting a model for the implementation of new teaching programmes through distance learning, the TLIF project team would suggest the following model:

1. First build new content understandings and relationships through a series of collaborative face to face opportunities.
2. Experiment with teaching new ideas with ongoing support (face-to-face)
3. Ensure all teachers and schools are able to access and use online resources and technologies
4. Provide online programmes that allow teachers to use the resources in different ways eg. hangouts, google docs, email, hard copy read and use resources.
Plans for sharing the findings

Four teachers attended the 2016 PENZ conference in Palmerston North in July where they shared the project aims, outcomes and some examples of activity.

Tim Morgan (Project Lead) also shared the project globally at the 2016 PHYSED summit online conference involving more than 500 physical educators from the United States, Canada, Australia and the UK. This presentation is available by contacting Tim.

In 2017, Tim is presented on behalf of Grow Waitaha on “Authentic Contexts – why and how” drawing on the experiences and learnings gained in the TLIF project.

The content used in TLIF016 was written and curated by Tim Morgan (Project Lead) and can be found at the below sites.

- [http://morgantim111.wixsite.com/activeparticipate](http://morgantim111.wixsite.com/activeparticipate)  
  (Accessed: 23 April 2018)
- [http://morgantim111.wixsite.com/mysite](http://morgantim111.wixsite.com/mysite)  
  (Accessed: 23 April 2018)

Participating teachers were also provided with a hard copy resource of task cards created by Tim. These are also found on the above sites.

Reference List


Petrie, K. C. (2013) re-imagining health and physical education in primary schools so that Everyone Counts. Primary Education. Taking stock, moving forward


For further information

If you would like to learn more about this project please contact the project leader at: [t.morgan@bishopdale.school.nz](mailto:t.morgan@bishopdale.school.nz)
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